

## Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, EGEN, EEC

SUBJECT: EC COUNCIL: A COMMISSION VIEW

1. SUMMARY: WELLENSTEIN HAS GIVEN US HIS VIEWS ON LAST WEEK'S EUROPEAN COUNCIL (HEADS OF GOVERNMENT) MEETING IN DUBLIN WHICH HE ATTENDED WITH ORTOLI AND NOEL. WELLENSTEIN NOTED THAT THE RESTRICTED FORMAT OF THE MEETING HAD, CONTRARY TO THE EXPECTATIONS OF SOME, GIVEN THE COMMISSION REPRESENTATIVES A CONSIDERABLE ROLE IN THE DISCUSSIONS. HE THINKS THAT ALTHOUGH THE POSSIBLE DANGER STILL EXISTS, FEARS THAT THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL MIGHT BECOME A "COURT OF APPEAL" WEAKENING NORMAL EC COUNCILS HAVE NOT BEEN BORNE OUT SO FAR. FINALLY, WELLENSTEIN SAID HE RECOGNIZES THE CONCERNS OF THE SMALLER MEMBER STATES THAT EUROPEAN COUNCILS WILL BE DOMINATED BY BARGAINING AMONG THE EC MAJORS. HOWEVER, HE THINKS THE FACT THAT THE COMMISSION IS PLAYING A SIGNIFICANT ROLE SHOULD PROVIDE SOME REASSURANCE TO THE SMALLER MEMBER STATES. WELLENSTEIN'S COMMENTS ON ENERGY QUESTIONS AT THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL ARE REPORTED BY SEPTTEL. END SUMMARY.

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2. EC COMMISSION DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

WELLENSTEIN ON MARCH 17 TOLD US HE WAS, IN GENERAL, QUITE PLEASED WITH THE OUTCOME OF THE DUBLIN MEETING. (BECAUSE OF THE EXTENSIVE REPORTING BY DUBLIN AND OTHER POSTS, WE DID NOT ATTEMPT TO REVIEW THE DETAILS OF ALL ASPECTS OF THE DUBLIN MEETING, BUT RATHER SOUGHT WELLENSTEIN'S PERSONAL ASSESSMENT). SOME ELEMENTS IN THE COMMUNITY HAD PREVIOUSLY THOUGHT THESE PERIODIC HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETINGS WOULD WEAKEN THE ROLE OF THE ROME TREATY INSTITUTIONS INCLUDING THE COMMISSION. IN PRACTICE, THIS HAS TURNED OUT NOT TO BE THE CASE SO FAR. ATTENDANCE AT THE ACTUAL WORKING SESSIONS WAS SO RESTRICTED THAT HEADS OF GOVERNMENT DID NOT HAVE EXPERTS TO ADVISE THEM AND COMMISSION PRESIDENT ORTOLI WAS UNDOUBTEDLY THE BEST BRIEFED OF THE PARTICIPANTS. WELLENSTEIN NOTED THAT THE OUTCOME (AND THE TEXTS OF THE DECLARATION ADOPTED) ON BOTH THE UK BUDGET CONTRIBUTIONS ISSUE AND ON NEW ZEALAND BUTTER WAS VERY CLOSE TO THE COMMISSION PROPOSALS, REFLECTING ORTOLI'S RELATIVE STRENGTH IN THE DISCUSSIONS. (ALTHOUGH WELLENSTEIN DID NOT MENTION IT, WE HAVE ALSO RECEIVED VERY POSITIVE REPORTS ON HIS OWN PARTICIPATION IN THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AS WELL AS THAT OF COMMISSION SECRETARY GENERAL NOEL, AND THE WORKING GROUPS ON THE NEW ZEALAND AND ON THE BUDGET ISSUES.)

3. WELLENSTEIN FELT EARLIER FEARS THAT THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL WOULD BECOME A "COURT OF APPEAL" FOR MATTERS WHICH COULD NOT BE SETTLED AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL--THUS BACKING UP NORMAL COMMUNITY BUSINESS IN THE PIPELINE--HAD NOT MATERIALIZED ALTHOUGH THIS POSSIBLE DANGER WILL CONTINUE TO EXIST.

4. WELLENSTEIN SAID THE COMMISSION IS AWARE OF THE CONCERN EXPRESSED BY SEVERAL SMALL EC MEMBER STATES THAT THESE PERIODIC MEETINGS OF HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MAY BE DOMINATED BY BARGAINING AMONG THE LARGER COMMUNITY MEMBERS. WHILE WELLENSTEIN DID NOT UNDER-ESTIMATE THE IMPORTANCE OF MEMBER STATE CONSULTATION PRIOR TO HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETINGS HE SAID HE THOUGHT THE INCREASED COMMISSION POWER PROVIDED EFFECTIVE INSURANCE FOR THE CONCERNS OF THE SMALLER STATES.

5. CONCLUDING, WELLENSTEIN SAID THERE MIGHT BE PROBLEMS IN FINDING SUITABLE IMPORTANT THEMES FOR FUTURE EUROPEAN COUNCILS. AS OF NOW, IT LOOKS AS IF THE CONSUMER/PRODUCER CONFERENCE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WILL OCCUPY A MAJOR PORTION OF THE EFFORTS OF THE NEXT MEETING. OVER A LONGER TERM, HE THOUGHT IT LIKELY THE HEADS OF GOVERNMENT WOULD GIVE MORE ATTENTION TO POLITICAL COOPERATION AND CONSULTATION. WELLENSTEIN STRONGLY DISAGREED WITH PRESS REPORTS TO THE EFFECT THAT THE HEADS OF GOVERNMENT HAD SPENT THEIR TIME DISCUSSING A NUMBER OF "SMALL POINTS" AT DUBLIN. HE SAID THE RENEGOTIATION QUESTION WAS UNIQUE AND EVEN THOUGH ITS SPECIFIC ELEMENTS CONSISTED OF BUDGET CONTRIBUTIONS AND

CHEESE, IT WAS IN FACT A POLITICAL THEME OF THE FIRST MAG-  
NITUDE WHICH COULD NOT BE IGNORED. GREENWALD

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